

the apro bulletin

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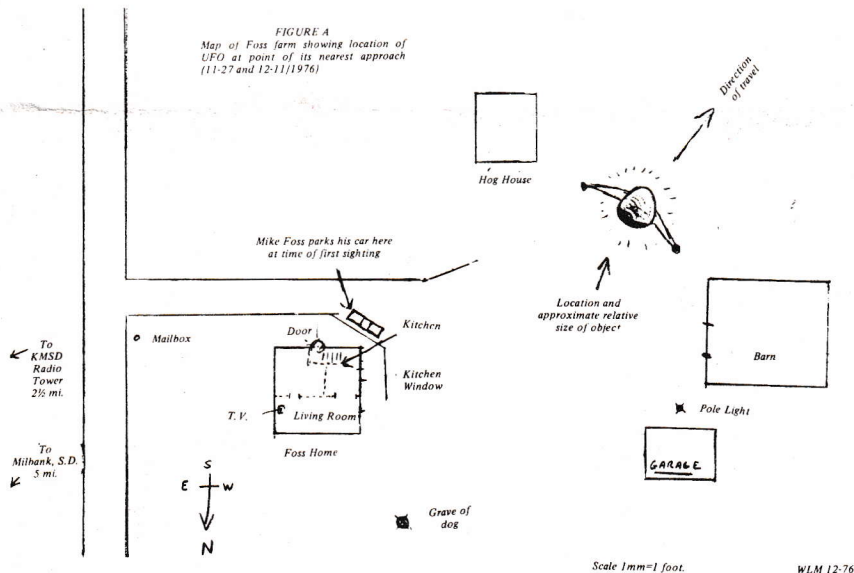
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TUCSON, ARIZONA

NOVEMBER 1976

REPEAT SIGHTINGS IN S.D., U.S.

By William M. Moore
Field Investigator



In spite of the fact that he apparently possesses numerous valuable talents, not the least of which is a gift for architectural design, a severe physical problem has forced twenty-seven year old Mike Foss of rural Milbank, South Dakota, to forego a promising career in favor of a less strenuous part-time job as a radio dispatcher for the local Milbank police department. Following a recent divorce, Mike has made his home with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Norman Foss, who live on a farm several miles south and a bit west of the city itself. Although the farm house has apparently been in Mrs. Foss' family for years, the Fosses themselves have only occupied the dwelling since June. Norman Foss is a retired nineteen-year veteran of the South Dakota Highway Patrol.

At about 6:30 P.M. (CST) on the evening of November 27, 1976, Mike Foss left a local auto body shop in Milbank intending to return home by car. The weather was clear and crisp — temperature near zero. Travelling south on highway 77 out of Milbank, he suddenly noticed a "tremendously bright, brilliant orange light" — perhaps better described as "a light without a source" — off to the west (right) of him. Almost immediately ruling out the moon, he continued to watch the object for a few moments until turning to proceed westward toward his parents' farm on a gravelled county road. Now realizing that whatever was responsible for the light was hanging over a field alongside the road, Foss stopped for a better look. (Note that he did not leave the car, nor did he notice any peculiar effects on the car's electrical system or engine.) At first thinking that he might be witnessing a helicopter he was not immediately apprehensive about it: however, he soon realized that whatever it was he was observing, was clearly not any sort of helicopter he was familiar with. Now somewhat frightened, Foss "floored the foot feed" and headed for home about a mile and a half away as fast as possible.

Believing he had left the object in the

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The Carter Sighting

In May of 1976, President Carter, at the time running for the Democratic nomination for President, allegedly told a National Enquirer reporter: "If I become President, I'll make every piece of information this country has about UFO sightings available to the public and the scientists. I am convinced that UFOs exist because I have seen one."

Many UFO enthusiasts have regarded the Carter statement as a major breakthrough for the field of UFO research, but we urge all to maintain a little cautious skepticism for several reasons. Two other presidents, Lyndon Johnson and Gerald Ford, made similar pronouncements prior to taking office as the United States' chief executive and of course no disclosures concerning UFOs were forthcoming.

At this writing, Carter is already beginning to back off on some of his campaign promises, and with his appointment of ex-Air Force Secretary Brown, (who presided in that position

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Fate To Host UFO Congress

APRO has been informed by Curtis G. Fuller, publisher of FATE magazine, that on the 24th, 25th and 26th of June, 1977, they will host an international UFO Congress to be held in Chicago. The Congress coincides with the 30th anniversary of Kenneth Arnold's sighting of nine disc-shaped objects over Mount Rainer in Washington state.

Over the years Fate Magazine probably published more UFO material than any other periodical in the world. Three hundred and twenty-three issues of FATE have come off the press since that first one in 1948 and nearly every issue has contained at least one responsible UFO article. It is often overlooked that FATE is one of the great historical UFO resources in the U.S. Mr. Fuller thinks it is important, therefore, that FATE recognize the 30th anniversary of Kenneth Arnold's sighting by sponsoring this International UFO Congress.

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THE A.P.R.O. BULLETIN

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Klass may turn out to be a "blessing in disguise" as far as UFO investigation is concerned. My reason for writing was stimulated by the above controversy and also just having read Ray Stanford's book "Socorro Saucer in a Pentagon Pantry" which I feel ties in very nicely with Mr. Klass. It would do well for APRO subscribers to evaluate Phil Klass in a much more objective manner by reading Mr. Stanford's book, since it deals directly with an earlier publication, "UFOs Identified," by Phil Klass. If the book written by Phil Klass were the only one read on the Socorro case, one could only conclude that the alleged landing was a pre-fabricated hoax. Mr. Stanford more than demolishes Mr. Klass' arguments. I would highly recommend that Mr. Stanford's book be reviewed by one of APRO's Consultants and then given to the subscribers to let them make up their own minds. I would like to see future books dealing directly with a thorough examination of a well-investigated case such as has been done by Mr. Stanford. My hat's off to Mr. Stanford for an excellent job."

Sincerely,
 Paul J. Smith

Book Review

Review of *Charles Fort, the Fortean Society, & Unidentified Flying Objects*, by Loren Gross (\$2.00, 113 pages, photographs, references).

by

David M. Jacobs
 Department of History
 Temple University
 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Letters

Regarding "The Disappearance of Oliver Lerch" (by Kevin Randle, APRO Bulletin September 1976).

The earliest printed account of this episode in my files is the story "The Vanishing Boy of South Bend" in a booklet authored by Harold T. Wilkins titled *Mysterious Disappearances of Men and Women in the U.S.A., Britain and Europe*, Edited by E. Haldemen-Julius, Haldeman-Julius Publications, Girard, Kansas, booklet #B-759, Copyright 1948, pp. 4-5. Wilkins, who had taken an interest in the unusual for many years, evidently first learned of the Lerch story long before 1946. The date of the Lerch disappearance in Wilkins' account is Christmas eve, 1900. On March 10, 1932

Wilkins wrote the managing editor of the *South Bend Tribune* asking for further information on the case. The editor, Rudolf H. Herst, replied on March 25, 1932, stating that as far as he knew the Lerch incident was purely imaginary, even so his newspaper received inquiries once in awhile about the supposed vanishment.

For the record Wilkins' version of Oliver Lerch's cry was: "Help! Do help! It's got me!"

Hope I could add something to the topic.
 Loren E. Gross

Letters

"I was pleased to see the *APRO Bulletin* carrying the running controversy on the Travis Walton case and its prime detractor - Phil Klass. I completely agree with your position that men like Phil

UFO research occupies a unique position in present-day academic disciplines. It has no established institutional backing or funding, no systematic scientific programs of study, and no central institute to coordinate researchers' efforts. Yet nearly all who study the UFO phenomenon are convinced of its enormous importance. Indeed, some consider it the most important scientific and academic problem facing mankind today. This state of affairs presents a dilemma to those who are interested in the UFO phenomenon: they want to learn more about it but have no traditional means of obtaining the information.

Despite the dearth of information, knowledge of the UFO phenomenon has steadily - albeit slowly - increased during the past twenty-five years. In part this
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South Dakota

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field behind him, he intended to pick up his parents and return to the spot to show them what he had seen. Accordingly, he began blowing his car's horn as soon as he approached the driveway, and, arriving at the house, jumped out of the car and ran into the house yelling to his mother and father to "come quick". They did. Returning back outside with his father, Mike realized that whatever he had left behind in that field was now perched a few feet in the air neatly between the hog house and the barn, about 100 feet from where they were standing (see diagram, figure A). For the next twenty to twenty-five minutes, the three Fosses watched as a large, somewhat egg-shaped object, blue at its base, but flashing multi-colored lights (mostly red) higher up and having two protruding legs or antennae, as it first hovered between the hog house and the barn, and then drifted (or appeared to drift) slowly straight away from them and off to the southwest, diminishing in size and intensity until it finally disappeared in the distance. The changing colored lights on the body of the object were described as being somewhat like a color-wheel used to light up Christmas trees in different colors, except that the colors did not change rapidly, but seemed to "melt" into one another. Orange, white, blue, red, and green were noted. (Mike Foss' concept of the object appears in his drawing of it, labelled Figure B).

Other significant facts in this encounter are as follows:

The distance between the barn and the hog house on the Foss farm is about sixty feet. The barn is located almost due west of the house, and the hoghouse is situated somewhat to the southwest. All three witnesses agreed that when the object was at its closest, it took up fully half the space between these two structures (perhaps 30 feet). Mike Foss' original estimate was that it was "about forty feet wide". Its height above the ground was described as "above the hog house (which is about 15 feet high), but lower than the peak of the barn, which is maybe 35 to 40 feet high".

Just before Mike Foss arrived home from this encounter with the object in the field, Mr. Foss had been watching television in the living room. According to Mr. Foss, just prior to Mike's rushing into the house, the television began to "act up" by rolling vertically. He said that the set had a tendency to do this when a high wind blew the antenna wires around on the roof, and he remembers thinking that a wind must have suddenly come up. (The channel involved was channel 10.) After the object left the area, the television was normal again.

Mr. Foss also states that, upon first

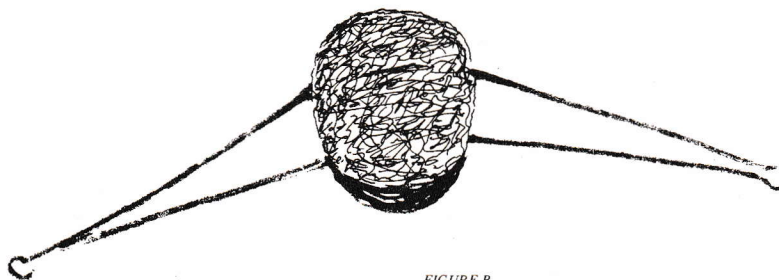


FIGURE B
Drawing made by Mike Foss 12-22-76.

going outside with Mike to watch the object, he could hear the sound of what he thought was traffic on the main highway about two miles east of the farm. He felt that "some heavy trucks must have been passing by". He also noticed a jet passing overhead going west, and says that he could clearly hear the aircraft and could see its wing lights. He noticed no other sounds.

All three witnesses recalled that the yard was lit up very brightly — much too bright to have been caused by the moon. Mike and Mr. Foss remembered seeing the moon in an entirely different part of the sky. (Note that the moon was approaching first quarter on the night of the 27th, and would have been riding fairly high in the south at 7:00 P.M.)

Also with regard to the yard being lit up, Mr. Foss recalls that his mercury vapor yard light, located near the barn (see diagram, Figure A.) was definitely on. (Mike assumed that it was on, but did not notice. Mrs. Foss did not recall.) In any event, this is interesting in that the light is operated by a photo-cell which turns it automatically on or off depending on the light conditions outside.

Mrs. Foss, who did not venture outside, states that after a few moments the two men came in to get a pair of opera glasses (6x15) to observe the object better. While they were looking for the glasses, she continued to watch the device from the kitchen window — which faces west and affords a good view of the area in question. She says that at this point the object began to drift away from its original position, moving away from the house at 180° toward the southwest. Then, appearing to have stopped once again, it began to emit, laterally, one at a time, what appeared to be "red balls" of some sort. These seemed to be without substance, were emitted from the sides of the object (but not at the same time) and travelled (or floated) about four of the parent object's diameters from the main body. One ball having reached this distance from the object, it then "exploded" (noiselessly) into nothing; at which point another "ball" emitted from the opposite side of the device to repeat the performance. By the time the men

managed to find the opera glasses and return (a matter of perhaps two minutes?) this phenomenon had ceased and the object had begun to recede again slowly to the southwest.

Although all witnesses agreed that the object had two protrusions or "legs" (Mr. Foss referred to them as "struts"), only Mike Foss noticed white lights on the tips of them. Mr. Foss clearly remembered the tips of the "struts" as being dark — almost "as if the ends didn't quite touch one-another".

About ten miles southwest of the Foss house is a low range of hills averaging about 1000' higher than the flat plain on which the area surrounding Milbank is situated. This range of hills is visible in the distance when looking south or southwest of the house. It is significant to note that all three witnesses observed that before the object's final disappearance in the distance, it was below this line of hills, and intermingled with some farm lights which can be seen off in the distance.

Mike Foss related that he was not particularly afraid of the object after his initial encounter with it, because, he said, he felt that "anyone who could produce a thing like that could have harmed (him) easily the first time, if it had hostile intent". He also stated that since this first sighting, he had experienced a strange recurrent dream in which he is alone on a hilltop "on a strange planet with a purple sky" watching a number of strange 'craft' maneuvering in the distance. "Some are silver and some are black, and there seems to be a war going on". In addition, he said he clearly felt that the object would return (it did — three times. See following.) and that it will return again. He was unable to explain why he felt that way.

Immediately after losing sight of the object, Mike suggested to his father that they both take a piece of paper and go into separate rooms to sketch what they had seen while it was still fresh in their memory. When they got together again to compare the sketches, they were strikingly similar.

True to Mike's prediction, the strange object returned again on three separate

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South Dakota

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occasions between the initial sighting on November 27, and its most recent appearance at about 8:00 P.M. Saturday evening, December 11th. On two of these occasions, it was sighted only at extreme distances as a bright orange light maneuvering off to the southwest of the house. Because of this distance factor, no positive identification could be made.

On the third occasion, the sighting was strikingly similar to the first. Again the object positioned itself between the barn and the hog house, again the weather was clear and cold, and as before, it remained in the area twenty to twenty-five minutes following the same pattern of slowly receding to the southwest. On this occasion, Mike's automatic police radio band scanner was on in the living room. At the appearance of the object, Mike noticed that the scanner had locked on to frequency seven and was emitting bursts of static. Frequency seven is a VHF frequency (approx. 140 MHz) used by the Minnesota Highway Patrol.

This time, Mike Foss called Milbank police and asked that a car be dispatched. Police Chief Ben Amsden personally came out but by the time he arrived, the object was only a bright light in the distance. (Amsden, however, did notice an orange glow in the vicinity of the Foss farm while proceeding toward it in the squad car.) Also reported to have seen the object, this time in the area of the KMSD radio tower about two and one half miles from the Foss house, are Mr. Don Adams, bartender at the local VFW club, and his wife.

Because of the fact that all sightings were on a clear evening and all were in a westerly direction, this investigator continued throughout the interview with the Fosses (Dec. 22) to nurture the possibility that this case might have its origins in a highly exaggerated sighting of the planet Venus, which is quite prominent in the southwest sky at this time. Having concluded the bulk of the interview, I suggested we go outside to view the area and to check for any abnormal radiation with a Geiger counter which I had brought along. Immediately upon passing through the door of the Foss home (which faces directly south), I sighted Venus hanging prominently in the southwest. "Look", I said, "Is that the object you saw!?" "No", replied Mike, "we've been watching that too, but it's a satellite, or a star, or something. That's not what we saw." A similar question to Mr. and Mrs. Foss upon our return indoors (they had remained inside) produced a similar answer. Mr. Foss explained he was familiar with Venus from having seen it so often while on the road with the Highway Patrol. My check

for abnormal radiation produced no exceptional results.

Only three other items in this case seem to be worthy of mention. The first is that on Sunday, December 12, 1976, one day after the last sighting of the object (and the second close approach by it), the Foss' seven year old AKC registered German shepherd became ill. (Mr. Foss had obtained the animal in May of 1973.) On the 13th, the dog was examined by a Dr. Dolney, DVM, from Milbank, who diagnosed the problem as an apparent stroke (the animal's veins had collapsed and the dog was in shock) and recommended that the dog be put to sleep. This was done, and the animal was buried where the old outhouse had stood. (The burial site was also checked for abnormal radiation, but again the results were negative.) The Fosses did not consider that there might be any connection between the appearance of the object and the death of the dog. It is also significant to note that the animal had once undergone an operation for tumors of some sort.

Perhaps more interesting is the question of the silo. Just as I was leaving the Foss home, Mr. Foss wondered out loud if his silo couldn't have had something to do with the repeated return (and apparent curiosity) of the object. Upon pursuing this, I discovered that completely housed *within* the Foss' barn is a twenty-foot diameter, thirty foot high *all steel* silo made of heavy pieces of boiler plate riveted together. He described it as looking like a "missile silo", and speculated that if the object they had seen was intelligently controlled (he thought it was) and possessed any sort of metal detection devices, it might have been understandably curious about what sort of structure was housed in that barn. Silos housed completely within barns are rare. All steel ones are almost unique!

The final item is that upon arriving home and going through my file, I discovered a copy of an old picture I had once obtained from NICAP. Shown in the photo (reportedly taken from aboard the USS Ramsey off the coast of California in 1957) is an object which is strikingly similar to the one described by the Foss.

"Fate"

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In a letter inviting Mr. and Mrs. Lorenzen to attend, Mr. Fuller wrote: "For the public portion of this congress we want to look at the total range of UFO phenomena. We intend to ask historical figures, scientists, percipients and other persons seriously involved in the whole UFO story to attend and participate. We are just beginning to

shape up the agenda and it will be structured along several themes."

The staff of APRO would like to urge the membership, wherever they are, to try to attend this history-making function. Also, those Arizona members who annually vacation in the East, should consider vacationing in the midwest so as to attend the Congress. The midwest is considerably cooler than the desert areas of Arizona and would add to the enjoyment of the vacation. Since the initial invitation, we have talked with Mr. Fuller and plans are going along smoothly. Mr. and Mrs. Fuller are old and dear friends of the Lorenzens and they are looking forward to the Congress and hope to see other old friends and perhaps make some new ones. Further information, as it is made available, will be published in the *Bulletin*.

Carter

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while the Air Force maintained its attitude that UFOs don't exist) as the new Secretary of Defense, it is doubtful that anything of portent will be revealed.

In an editorial in the UFOIC Newsletter, the official periodical of the Unidentified Flying Object Investigation Center in Australia, Bill Chalker editorialized about the Carter statement: "Was Carter's statement mere 'election rhetoric' or could it have been of 'stronger stuff' as many have seen in his frank discussions in the 'Playboy' interview?" Chalker also referred to Gerald Ford's interest in UFOs and the fact that after he got into the White House the matter never came up again.

One problem in this area is the accessibility of the President once he is installed. Whereas during the period of time that he is campaigning for office he is eager for exposure to the press, after the election he is closely guarded and can be reached for questioning only through the White House press corps. Unless one could interest one of them in the subject, one would have a difficult time of broaching the subject to the president. Also it is a fact that at least part of the time the questions to be asked of the President must be submitted ahead of time and then those to which the President responds are selected by the Press Secretary.

At this juncture we can only hope that Jimmy Carter is a man of his word and will do what he said he would.

The sighting that Carter referred to was not a spectacular one, but it was enough to impress him. No exact date was given, but after a speech before the Lions Club

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Carter

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at Thomaston, Georgia in 1973, he and several others were stepping out into the parking lot when they spotted three lights clustered together which were changing color from red to green. The combined size of the lights was compared to that of the moon. They were positioned off to one side of the moon. It drifted slowly across the sky, then "disappeared quickly." Reportedly a total of twenty people observed the object.

Review

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is because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers who have used their own time and funds to collect and analyze the data. These volunteers, working individually and in organizations, have filled the vacuum that the scientific and academic communities created by abrogating their duty to explore systematically the nature and origins of the UFO phenomenon.

The private UFO researchers and their organizations kept the issue before the public in the dark days of UFO research — in the 1950s and 1960s when the Air Force's public relations efforts in part dictated the public's response to the phenomenon. The UFO organizations provided the public with alternative explanations to official pronouncements about the origins of the reports and, at the same time, gave researchers a forum for their work and a place to exchange information about the subject. The "professionals" owe a large debt of gratitude to these indefatigable volunteers. Loren Gross is a good example of the volunteer researcher who, through his independent efforts, has extended the perimeters of knowledge about UFOs.

Interested in UFOs since the 1950s, Mr. Gross followed the familiar pattern of involvement in the subject. He collected a library of UFO books and materials, immersed himself in the study of the phenomenon, and joined a UFO organization (NICAP). In 1964 he was dedicated enough to use his private savings to help finance NICAP's immensely important study *The UFO Evidence*.

In recent years, Gross has studied the history of UFO sightings and has published several booklets on this subject. The first two, *The UFO Wave of 1896* and *The Mystery of the Ghost Rockets*, came out in 1974. Now Mr. Gross has published his most ambitious effort: *Charles Fort, the Fortean Society, & Unidentified Flying Objects* (available for

\$2.00 from Loren Gross, 38675 Paseo Padre #305, Fremont, California 94356). The three booklets present a continuum of UFO sighting reports from 1896 to the modern era.

The UFO Wave of 1896 is the most complete account of the Pacific Coast sightings yet published. It is an indispensable chronicle for every person interested in the mystery airship wave. The next booklet, *The Mystery of the Ghost Rockets*, is perhaps his best and certainly the most well-written. Through persistent digging in European newspapers, he shows that the ghost rocket phenomenon was not limited to Sweden (sightings occurred throughout Europe) and that it must be considered as a precursor to the modern era.

In his latest booklet Gross focuses on UFO sightings between 1897 and 1946. He unearths some interesting 1897 sightings and also some important material from the 1910s. He attempts to show the attitudes of Charles Fort, the Fortean Society, and Tiffany Thayer (the head of the Society after Fort) toward the UFO phenomenon.

The result is a disparate, rather disjointed narrative. Gross talks about sightings and about Fort or Thayer, but he fails to relate one to another. Also, Gross tries to paint Fort and Thayer as pre-modern visionaries who foresaw the UFO phenomenon. A case might be made for Fort, but not for Thayer, who never realized the potential of the mysterious sightings and suffered from a lack of imagination. In addition, Gross affects a breezy jargon that severely detracts from the flow of his story and adds unnecessary verbiage.

Yet the booklet has several strengths. His attempt to isolate Fort's and Thayer's responses to the UFO phenomenon contributes to our understanding of these two men. Moreover, once again Gross uncovers a wealth of material about UFO sightings before 1947. He demonstrates that the period prior to 1947 is a fertile field for UFO researchers to plow. We owe Gross a debt of gratitude for uncovering new areas of UFO research.

Two Reports From Japan

by Vance Dewey

The first report was supplied to APRO by Yashihiko Honda of Osaka, and was described in the Modern Space Flight Association's UFO Report of September 15, 1976 (Osaka) as "the most outstanding humanoid sighting in Japan so far."

The sighting took place in Kofu on Sunday, February 23, 1975, about 6:30 p.m. Kofu is a small city located 110 km west of Tokyo in a mountainous area.

The principal witnesses were two seven year old boys, Masato Kono and Katsuhiko Yamahata, who were roller skating on a paved area next to an apartment house near Kono's home. Yamahata was the first to notice a strange light in the sky. As the boys watched the light more closely, they saw that there were two clear orange-colored lights approaching from the east. The larger light made a turn to the north toward Mt. Atago, while the smaller light continued toward the boys with an irregular motion. When the light was near them, they heard a "tick-tack" sound from it. The boys hid nearby and watched the light fly about until it went out of sight.

Thinking they had seen the last of it, the boys started home. Yamahata then noticed that the light had landed in a vineyard a short distance beyond Kono's home. At first they thought it was a fire in the vineyard, but as they approached, the light took off to a considerable height, then landed again near the center of a grapevine trellis.

The boys described the object as about five meters in diameter and about two meters high, and of a typical domed saucer shape with three hemispherical landing "feet." From a distance the UFO appeared to be a clear luminous orange color, but from one meter or less the surface was observed as silver colored. On one side of the craft, Kono found five large Oriental-appearing but unknown characters raised on the surface, and four more characters on the opposite side.

While Kono was examining the characters, Yamahata started to walk around the craft. When he reached the opposite side, Kono heard a clatter from inside the craft. The craft opened, and a ladder extended silently to the ground. A humanoid wearing silver-colored clothing and carrying an instrument resembling a rifle or shotgun descended the ladder close to Kono. He described the humanoid as 1.3 meters tall with dark brown skin, pointed ears, no eyes, nose, nor mouth, and walking with his toes turned outward. There were wavy wrinkles all over his face, and three silver-colored fangs about five cm long pointed down from the usual position for a mouth. The head was remarkably large compared with the body, and was completely bald.

When Yamahata came around the craft near the humanoid, he and Kono were both able to look inside and saw a second similar but smaller humanoid seated with one hand on what appeared to be a control lever. The boys became frightened and started to run away, but the humanoid patted Yamahata twice on the left shoulder. The boys turned around and had a closer look at the humanoid's face. The humanoid spoke to them in a voice resembling a tape recorder running

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too fast or in reverse. The boys then ran to Kono's home about 100 meters away, and found Yamahata's parents there also.

When Kono tried to tell the adults that a UFO had landed in the vineyard, he was told not to talk nonsense. But when Yamahata said the same thing, the mothers went outside with the boys to look. They saw the luminous orange light shining in the middle of the vineyard. Since they were still more than 50 meters away, the mothers thought they might be seeing an illusion caused by a light in a house on the far side of the vineyard appearing to be closer. Just then the orange light began pulsating rapidly, then suddenly became bright, then dim and disappeared. They went to the spot where the light had been, but in the dark could not find any positive evidence that anything had been there.

Following this initial report, further investigation was conducted by the Japan Space Phenomena Society. We hope the results of this additional investigation will be available to present in a later issue of the *Bulletin*.

The second incident was reported by Jun-Ichi Takanashi, Chairman of the Modern Space Flight Association of Osaka and APRO's representative for Japan. This incident began about 8:00 p.m. of October 1, 1975. Two youths, Michio Hikawa, 19, and Takeshi Furuya, 18, both living in the town of Hakushu (about 30 km to the west of Kofu), were out for an evening drive in Hikawa's father's 1971 Suzuki Fronte. They stopped in the parking lot of the Southern Alps National Park, a popular tourist area in the summer but deserted in October, to chat and listen to the car stereo. Suddenly Furuya became agitated and said he saw a group of children resembling beggars near the car. Hikawa was surprised because he could not see anyone. Furuya indicated he also saw some other figures that appeared to be girls about one meter in height wearing white clothing, and pointed to them in several directions. Hikawa still could not see anything, and since it was quite dark, he turned on the car's headlights. Furuya said this caused the figures to fade away. There are no homes in the vicinity, so it is quite improbable that any children were playing there.

Suddenly the car was pulled backward several meters so rapidly that Furuya fell forward. Hikawa was holding the steering wheel, and was not affected much by the sudden motion. This pulling effect was repeated two more times, moving the car backward several meters each time. The car was parked in a level area with the parking brake firmly set, so the youths were certain that the car was actually

pulled rather than merely rolling. By this time they were quite frightened, so Hikawa started the car and drove back to town at high speed.

On the way they were discussing their experience. Hikawa remembered having read that "spacemen" prefer to land in remote places near lakes and power stations. Since a reservoir and hydroelectric power generator are near the parking area, Hikawa suggested the figures Furuya saw might have been "spacemen." This idea shocked Furuya, who then added that the figures did appear to be strange, with bright yellow glowing eyes. He said he also saw something like a cow's hoof rubbed on the glass window on his side of the car.

When the youths reached town, they called on several of their friends to ask them to go back to the park with them, but all refused. With curiosity replacing their earlier fear, they returned to the park, this time stopping the car facing down a slope to help them get away more quickly.

The instant Hikawa stopped the car and while he still had his foot firmly on the brake, the car was pulled slowly back up the slope for about three meters. Thinking that the motion might be an illusion since the car had just stopped, they both opened the windows and looked out at the wheels, which were actually rotating in reverse.

Furuya then reasoned that if spacemen were present they might understand Japanese, so he called out to them to pull the car again. Nothing happened. Hikawa got out of the car and tried calling out some meaningless, cheerful-sounding words. There was no response until he got back into the car; then it was pulled backward again. After this sequence was repeated three or four times, they became frightened again and returned to their homes. They agreed that they would not tell anyone else about their experience.

The next morning Hikawa and his father were working together in the family's farm. The son's mind was on his experiences of the evening before and he frequently looked up into the sky. As a result, he cut his finger instead of the crop. He finally told his father what had happened the night before. Instead of the expected ridicule, his father said he had noticed the marks on the car window earlier that morning. (Hikawa had not yet mentioned seeing the hoof-like object being rubbed on the glass.) Later they examined the car and found it to be in very poor condition even though it had run very smoothly the night before. It made strange noises and would not start. The battery water level was checked, and was less than half full even though it had been filled only ten days earlier and no leaks could be found. When they took the car to a garage, the mechanic said a piston was broken. This was unexpected since they had bought the car new and had

driven it only 28,000 km.

There is still no satisfactory explanation for the movement of 585 kg mass of passengers and car (with the brakes applied) as described. There are no nearby homes, and the campground and parking area were unoccupied, which virtually eliminates human pranksters. There are wild monkeys in the vicinity, but it is doubtful that they could move the car. If monkeys were there, both youths should have been able to see them.

There is no mention in this report that either youth saw anything resembling any type of UFO. The movement of the car does correlate to a considerable degree with the experience of three women from Liberty, Kentucky, on January 6, 1976. As reported in the *National Enquirer* of October 19, 1976, their car first was increased in speed by a UFO, then dragged backward before stopping, followed by their abduction aboard the UFO for 80 minutes.

The 1890s "Flap"

By Jerry Mathers

The first flying saucer "flap" did not occur in this country in 1947 as is commonly thought. It occurred in the 1890s!

That's right, the Gay Nineties. While the advent of heavier than air flight was near (1903), and hot-air balloons no rarity in civilized areas, whatever was maneuvering through our skies throughout 1896 and 1897 was no primitive, uncontrollable balloon.

Thousands of people from all walks of life from coast to coast reported a strange "airship" flying low overhead. Reports were particularly common in the Midwest, and included sightings of airship occupants and even the kidnapping of a cow!

The log of these airships — for there had to be at least two — can be traced from coast to coast and border to border.

At Oakland, Cal., some streetcar passengers reported a winged cigar-shaped ship that sent out a bright stream of light. This same description would be heard again and again across the nation.

In late January, 1897, a second ship was seen over Montreal for a week, and also spotted near Albany, N.Y. The *Chicago Chronicle* on Feb. 2, said: "A strange star or light in the heavens has been puzzling the people of Montreal for a week." The light appeared a little after 5 p.m., disappeared a bit after 7. It was thought to be a military balloon used in maneuvers.

(To Be Continued in
the next issue.)
